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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LISBON 000410

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/15/2018  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [MARR](#) [PO](#)  
SUBJECT: FM AMADO, AMBASSADOR DISCUSS KOSOVO, AFGHANISTAN,  
LAJES AIR BASE, AND COMMUNITY OF DEMOCRACIES

REF: A. STATE 15111  
[1](#)B. LISBON 351  
[1](#)C. LISBON 350  
[1](#)D. STATE 14246  
[1](#)E. STATE 13716  
[1](#)F. LISBON 251  
[1](#)G. LISBON 183

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Classified By: AMBASSADOR THOMAS STEPHENSON FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)  
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#### Summary

[1](#)1. (C) In a one-on-lunch with the Ambassador on February 14, FM Luis Amado said he would push for Portugal to be among the first wave of countries recognizing Kosovo, if there is agreement on an EU umbrella statement. Amado is pushing for a Portuguese commitment to lead a second OMLT in Afghanistan, once its commando company withdraws in August. Regarding the potential for a new air-to-air training area north of the Azores archipelago, Amado suggested the United States make an official proposal at the Bilateral Commission February 21 so that the GOP could begin formal consideration of the concept. The Ambassador encouraged Portugal to demonstrate dynamic leadership in its chairmanship of the Community of Democracies, and he gave Amado a heads-up that we would be reaching out to negotiate a bilateral memorandum of understanding governing Portugal's participation in the Visa Waiver Program. End Summary.

#### Kosovo

[1](#)2. (C) In a one-on-one lunch he hosted at the MFA for the Ambassador on February 14, FM Amado said he was still hopeful EU member states would be able to agree on a consensus statement in response to a Kosovo CDI, but Spain and Cyprus were now the primary obstacles. According to Amado, FM Moratinos had promised his party that Spain would not recognize Kosovo without an EU agreement. When the Ambassador pressed for Portugal's quick recognition of Kosovo (per refs A and E), Amado said -- if there is an umbrella EU statement -- he would push for Portugal to be among the first wave of EU member states conferring recognition.

#### Aghanistan

[1](#)3. (C) The Ambassador urged that Portugal reconsider its recent decision to reduce its ISAF deployment in August, from a company of commandos to a 15-person OMLT and a C-130.

Amado expressed unhappiness with the way that announcement had been handled (NB: we learned of it through an Iranian news service account of parliamentary testimony by Minister of Defense Severiano Teixeira) as well as with the decision itself. He implied that President Cavaco Silva had been behind the decision. We do not have the sense that the Portuguese military is overstretched, the Ambassador remarked, and Amado concurred. The Foreign Minister added that he had spoken to Severiano Teixeira the day before to urge that Portugal provide a second OMLT in addition to the one it had already committed to.

#### Lajes training area

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14. (C) The Ambassador remarked on the GOP's apparent nervousness regarding the possibility of establishing an air-to-air training area for fighter jets north of the Azores. Did the insistence by GOP officials in the media that there had been only informal, "technical level" discussions but no formal negotiations reflect opposition within the GOP to the concept? Not at all, Amado replied. His only concern was to avoid the perception that the central government in Lisbon was getting ahead of the Regional Government of the Azores, and his own public comments on the topic had been made for public consumption in the Azores. In fact, the concept makes sense, and the U.S. side should propose it in the upcoming Bilateral Commission so that the GOP can then take it up formally.

#### East Timor

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15. (C) Amado said he was monitoring developments in East Timor closely and was in regular contact with his Australian counterpart. He was not aware that Dili had yet requested deployment of additional Portuguese paramilitary troops

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(GNR).

#### Community of Democracies

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16. (C) Per ref D, the Ambassador encouraged Portugal to demonstrate dynamic leadership in its current chairmanship of the Community of Democracies (CD), and to mold it into a more action-oriented organization. Amado noted that, with the EU presidency now over, his Ministry was only now turning its attention to the CD. His staff is taking a serious look at the objectives Portugal might pursue and he hoped to have more clarity shortly.

#### Visa Waiver Program -- MOUs

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17. (C) The Ambassador informed Amado that we would soon be reaching out to his chief of consular affairs to begin the process of negotiating a bilateral Memorandum of Understanding governing Portugal's participation in the Visa Waiver Program. The Minister had no substantive comment.

#### Comment

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18. (C) In a sign of the importance he places on ties with Washington, Amado extended this lunch invitation within two hours after the Ambassador had presented his credentials on February 8. The Minister was engaging and knowledgeable, and the Ambassador was able to build an extremely positive rapport. It is clear that Amado disagrees with the Afghanistan drawdown decision and will do all he can to ensure Portugal remains engaged there to the extent possible, and the Ambassador will press President Cavaco Silva on that front when they next meet. We learned nothing new on Kosovo, although Amado's comment that he would press for

Portugal to be among the first wave of countries conferring recognition contradicts the recent remarks of his political director, Vasco Bramao Ramos, who has told us Portugal would not recognize immediately (ref C). Regarding the potential for an air-to-air training area north of the Azores, we will take Amado's suggestion and raise the idea officially at the Bilateral Commission meeting on February 21.

Stephenson